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SECTION II.

ARCHAEOLOGY.

X172 As has been stated, the villages of the earliest known period centered about the mouth of Heart River, with Square Butte Creek for the northern and Apple Creek for the southern limit. Several sites in this area were examined, and one site, in almost all respects the best, was somewhat extensively explored.

X172 361 ●133 Of the village sites which were only incidentally studied, the most southern was that on the west bank of the Missouri near old Fort Abraham Lincoln. This village, roughly triangular in shape, occupied a bench bounded on one side by an old wash bank of the river, on another side by a deep narrow coulée, and on the remaining side by a high, steep hill. The mounds are low and indefinite in outline and evidently much disturbed. On the river side there is an extensive talus composed largely of refuse. Here there has also been a considerable landslide. On the side nearest the hill there are traces of a ditch, this side being the only one not protected by nature.

Another site, possessing natural defenses of the highest order, is located about three miles northwest of Bismarck, on the east bank of the river. Here, a promontory with a level, circular summit is almost entirely cut off from the high bench by deep precipitous ravines. The narrow neck, as shown in Map II, $\frac{1}{A}$ was protected by a ditch and wall. The ditch and wall show two ox-bow like protuberances which may be the remains of a well-flanked gate. A ditch is also seen at a point on the river side where the hill-slope is less steep than usual. On the northern side, is a sort of platform along the hillside, about ten feet below the crest. This may be the remains of a ditch and wall, so placed that the higher level of the village would be a vantage point in defense of the palisades. This will be referred to as the Ward site.

$\frac{1}{A}$ [facing p. 148]

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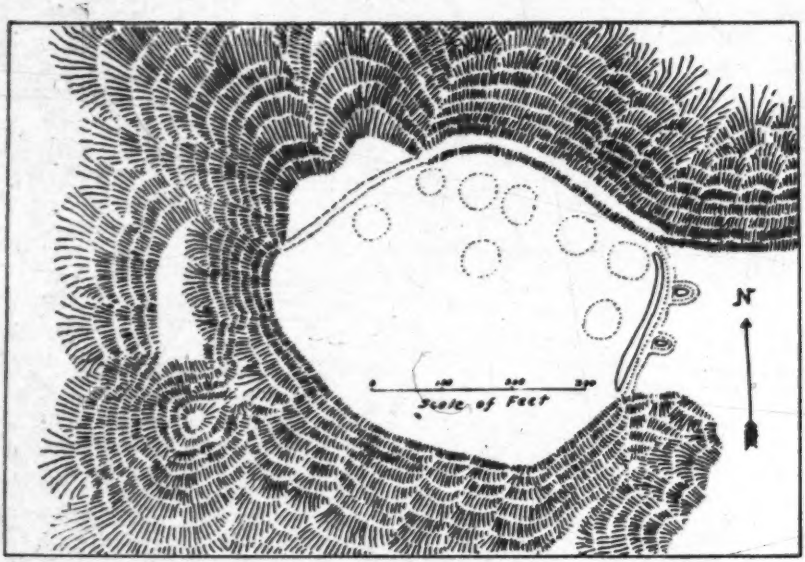
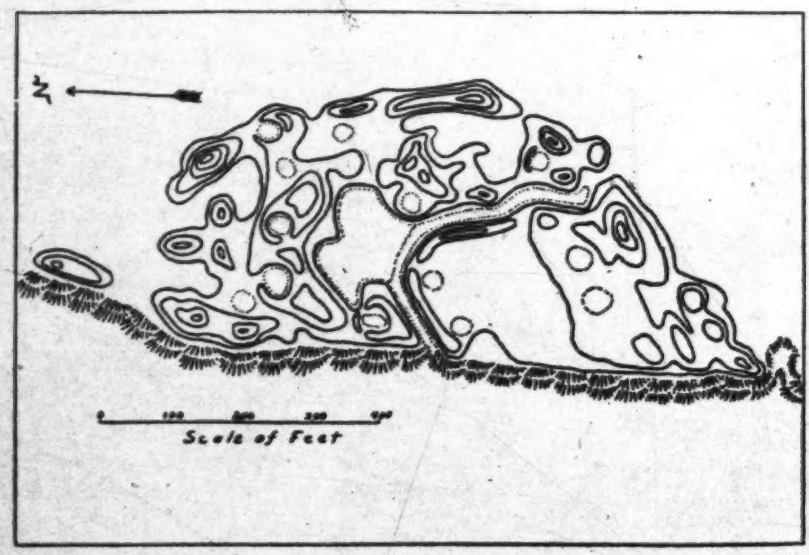


MAP II. THE WARD SITE.
Dotted lines surround sunken areas.



MAP III. LARSON SITE.
Dotted lines surround sunken areas. Contour interval is two feet.

[Facing p. 148]

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A third village location, the Larson site, is almost devoid of any natural defenses. It is situated on the east bank of the river, about seventeen miles above Bismarck. This village was built upon the edge of a wide, level bench which ranges only about thirty feet above the flood plain of the Missouri. As may be seen by Map III,[1] the remains consist of a well-marked ditch which traverses the central portion of the site, a sunken area near one end of the ditch, and a series of mounds, the largest of which are on the margin of the site. Unfortunately, the plow has disturbed the original contours of the mounds. Moreover, there is some evidence that the river may have cut away the bank and destroyed part of the site. The position of the larger mounds on the outer edge is in accordance with the theory that they were fortifications. But the position of the ditch is something of a mystery. Instead of surrounding the site, it seems to cut across it and divide it into two nearly equal parts. Adjoining the ditch, and near the wash bank, is a large sunken area which may have been the town square.

The Burgois site (Plates XXVIII, XXIX), which furnished the principal material for this paper, is about fourteen miles northwest of Bismarck, on the east bank of the river. It is conspicuously placed on the summit of a high bluff which commands a fine view up and down stream. Above the site, the Missouri swings in a wide curve known as Mountaineer Bend, at the upper end of which is situated the Larson site previously described. Below, the river spreads into a maze of islands and sand bars. It seems reasonable that this village may be identified with the one described by Lewis and Clark as being at the head of a large island, the island having since disintegrated.

On the south, about one hundred yards from the outer limits of the village remains, is a deep ravine; to the north and east there is a gentle slope towards the level prairie land. Below the bluff, stretch the bottom lands, partly meadow-land and partly timbered with cotton-wood, ash and diamond willow.

The remains extend for thirteen hundred feet along the edge of the bluff and eight hundred feet back. They comprise, first, mounds from one to ten feet in height; second, continuous ditches; third, circular, slightly sunken house rings; fourth,

[1] [facing p. 148.]

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small sunken areas marking old cache pits. Map IV gives a general survey of the village. In this map the natural configuration of the land is represented in hachures, while the artificial mounds and depressions are represented, as well as the simple means at hand would permit, by contour lines with an interval of two feet.

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The large mounds are on the outside of the village site. They form a more or less continuous chain of earthworks, outside of, and between the two encircling ditches. If Verendrye spoke the truth in regard to the neatness and cleanness of the Mandan villages, these large mounds could not well have been dump heaps as some investigators appear to think. A more natural dump heap is located along the bluff front. It is more reasonable to identify them with the earth ramparts and bastions which, he says, were wide enough to allow the game of Skohpe to be played upon them. Moreover, there is a strategic fitness in many of them in regard to shape and location. Thus Mound *a* guards admirably the approach from the ravine south of the village. Two crescent mounds, *g* and *j*, would be strongholds in defense of the village. Many of the mounds, for instance *a* and *c*, have wall-like protuberances, which may have been extended breastworks.

The mounds, as may be seen by the map, are of various shapes and sizes. Mound *a*, the largest, is nearly a perfect rectangle, except for the irregular line of small mounds attached to one corner. It measures about one hundred and twenty feet in length, and is about eight feet high. Most of the larger mounds are of approximately the same height. Two mounds, *g* and *j*, before mentioned, are distinctly crescent-shaped. The other large mounds are either oval in shape or are irregular with two or more summits.

The smaller mounds are, for the most part, between the two ditches. They are irregular in shape, and range from a few inches in height to three or four feet. A few low mounds are found outside the circle of large mounds.

There are two ditches. The inner ditch, *y*, *y*, *y*, can be traced throughout its course, but the outer ditch, *z*, *z*, *z*, appears broken. The inner ditch encircles an area about five hundred

[Facing p. 151.]

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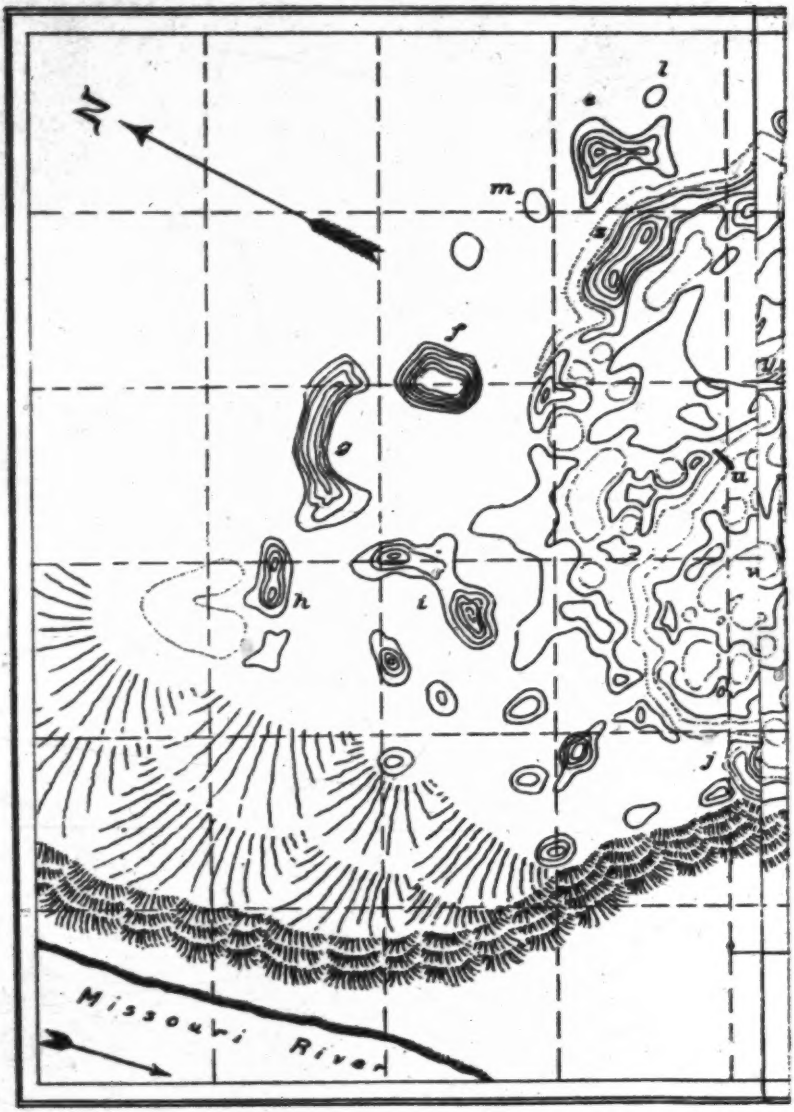

Map IV. [illegible]
Contour interval is two feet. Dotted lines sunken

[Folded map facing p. 151 (A)]

3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
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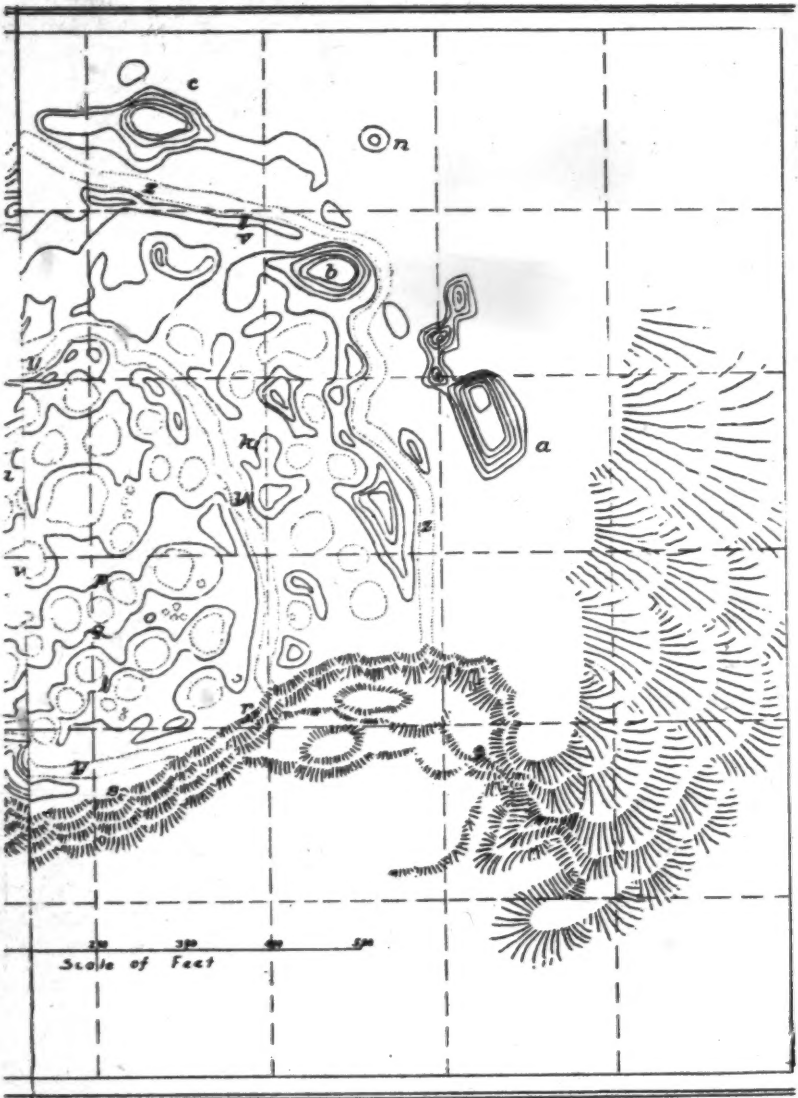

V. ERGOIS SITE.
sunken areas. Hatchures show natural configuration

[Folded map facing p. 151 (B)]